WORKPLACE LEARNING POLICY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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| Question | Answer |
| Can a Work Experience student do work experience on a weekend? | Yes, provided that weekend work ‘is an essential requirement of the industry’. However, there is no Department expectation that schools are expected to approve work experience during or over a weekend.  If the school believes the student will gain increased benefit for their career planning or post-school prospects that are not available to them during week-day operations, then the school can approve work experience on a weekend for students in Years 9-12.  Approval from the Principal should be obtained. This could be on a case by case basis or more generally depending on the views of the Principal.  The usual arrangements for work experience apply including provision of the emergency contact card and training in its use and a nominated contact from the school during the weekend part of the work experience. The parent/carer is the contact outside ‘normal business hours’ on the weekend. Immediate follow up after the weekend work experience must also be scheduled by the school.  Reference: WPL Procedures and Standards: Section 1.2.1 *Scheduling of workplace learning.* |
| Confirm that year 11 and 12 are covered during the school holidays except the Christmas break. The way I read is that Year 10 are not covered except from 7:00am till 6:00pm during school days, but year 11 and year 12 can do work experience during school holidays if essential. Please confirm. | Individual students in Years 11-12 can undertake workplace learning during the holidays, except the Xmas holidays. This is on the basis that there are exceptional circumstances and that all parties are in agreement. These arrangements do not extend to students in Years 9-10.  Reference: WPL Procedures and Standards: Section 1.2.1 *Scheduling of workplace learning.*  There is no expectation by the Department that schools are expected to approve workplace learning during a holiday period.  Should a school decide to support an opportunity during the school holidays, all the Department’s procedures for workplace learning during term time apply during a placement approved by the Principal to occur during the holidays. The parent/carer is the contact after normal business hours during the holiday placement. The Department’s insurance and indemnity arrangements apply and there is no need to submit applications to the Senior Pathways Unit. Immediate post –placement follow up must be planned and undertaken after the placement and not left until school resumes.  **Workplace learning for Year 12s during the ‘holiday period’ post their final HSC exam**  Where a Year 12 student asks beforehand to undertake workplace learning or in exceptional circumstances to complete their HSC VET work placement after their final HSC exam, a submission from the school must be submitted to the Senior Pathways Unit to support a request from the Unit for an extension of cover. The Unit i**s** happy to be contacted on 9244 5834.  Under normal circumstances HSC VET work placements should be completed before that information must be submitted to the Board of Studies. Year 12 students must complete their mandatory work placements before their final HSC exam.  Where students are undertaking a Life Skills pattern of study for the HSC, they may undertake workplace learning during Term 4 if they are enrolled to the end of the school year.  Reference: WPL Procedures and Standards: Section 1.2.2 |
| There was a lot of angst about risk assessments 'for every placement', as one principal wanted. | Schools are not required to undertake a risk assessment for every placement. Host employers risk assess the activities students will be undertaking by way of their conscientious responses on the Student Placement Record. Ask for more information if needed. They also make a number of important declarations on that Record about supporting student safety and wellbeing in their workplace.  Concurrently, schools must exercise the required duty of care for their students (see Procedures and Standards, Section 1.4.5ff). Together, the host employer’s responses and declarations and the Department’s duty of care procedures work to minimise risks to students. In terms of WHS, this is ‘as far as is reasonably practicable’. See WPL Policy: Sections 1.3 and 1.4.  For proposed workplace learning placements, especially if they are new to the school or pose potential risks to the student, follow the procedures in WPL Procedures and Standards in sections 1.4.2-.1.4.3. Where resources are stretched, focus on where the most risk lies in terms of the particular student and their needs, the experience of an employer in hosting students, the placement activities and the context of the placement eg proposed overnight accommodation, split shifts. For work experience programs, schools should be making phone contact with employers to ensure that the employers are aware of their responsibility to provide a safe environment for the students and suitable activities. See Section 5 ‘Providing a Safe Workplace’ in *The Workplace Learning Guide for Employers.* |
| What are the hours available for work experience? How does this vary for different age groups? | Traditionally the hours for workplace learning are weekday normal business hours during term time. However, as so many businesses operate outside 8/8.30-5/5.30, there is cover for a broader range of hours if required. The nominated contact outside normal business hours is the student’s parent or carer or suitable person they nominate - and agreed to by the school.  The only exception is students aged 14 and they must not work before 7am or after 6pm. See WPL Procedures and Standards: Section 1.2.1 *Scheduling of workplace learning.*  Where a student aged 15 or over requests an early start, for example, in a bakery, the Principal needs to be consulted. The school needs to weigh up the benefits and ensure that they have identified the risk factors and how they will be well managed eg travel; type of student activities; what the student will do after their placement finishes in the morning; and who will then be responsible for the student. This needs to be documented and agreed to by the parent/carer.  Similarly, split shifts are covered by DEC insurance and indemnity arrangements but preparation of students must include potential risk factors such as travelling home at night, and how those factors will be managed. The school needs to be clear about who is providing supervisory contact with the student between shifts, and where and what the student will be doing between shifts if they are not able to return to school. The arrangements should be documented. |